Lincoln Bricks (from Equality, Illinois) DRAWER 29 Architectural Features

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Curios and Relics

Architectural Features

Lincoln Bricks

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

A woman i nspects one of the rare bricks at Equality.

Started as Business Failure

Lincoln Bricks Now a Rarity

By Grover Brinkman
For the Herald and Review
Equality

As Lincoln's 158th birthday anniversary nears, sharp focus is drawn to the Great Emancipator and the many images still retained in Illinois.

The late Thaddeus McIntyre, owner of a brick kiln in Southern Illinois, got the idea to retain the face of Lincoln forever by molding it into the face of an ordinary brick.

So a brick mold was made, with Lincoln's face in bas-relief, and McIntyre started burning clay bricks, the face of which had the sharply defined features of the 16th president.

But the bricks would not stack. They had no use in ordinary construction, so McIntyre realized all too soon that his experiment was a failure. The brick mold was shelved, and manufacture of the picture bricks was discontinued.

As time passed the unwanted bricks turned into collectors' items. Almost overnight, people journeyed to Equality, the site of the brick kiln, to obtain some of the Lincoln bricks.

The few still available got into collectors' hands in Illinois and various other sections of the nation. The value zoomed from a novelty to a rare item of antiquity.

So intense became the search for the treasured bricks that one householder in Equality, owner of some of the bricks as part of his sidewalk, had to take them up to keep them from being stolen.

A rumor to the effect that an old well at Equality had been paved with the bricks brought a new surge of brick hunters. But the well never was found.

Today, several business buildings in Illinois have one or more of the treasured bricks encased in a wall.

It is known that McIntyre made thousands of the bricks but the hand of time has erased most of them from the Illinois scene.

Decatur, Illinois, Sunday, January 29, 1967

Central Illinois Scene

THE LINCOLN BRICK OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

by
Ron Deiss

Moline, Ill.

Item available in the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection at the Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana

For contact information, go to www.LincolnCollection.org.

(southern Illinois brick embossed with
a portrait of President Abraham Lincoln)